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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**EULEX marks tenth year in Kosovo (*Zeri*)**

Under the headline *Money for Nothing,* the paper highlights that the EU rule of law mission has marked its tenth year in Kosovo. In this time, according to the paper, the mission has spent over 1.6 billion euros and has failed in fighting organised crime and corruption. EULEX however disagrees. In a statement to the paper, its public information office said the mission has achieved significant progress and has created a legacy in the field of justice and its judges have issued verdicts on 648 cases. Deputy chairman of the Kosovo Assembly’s committee on internal affairs and security, Vetevendosje’s Rexhep Selimi, said those who managed to escape justice are the ones who are mostly rejoicing to the end of EULEX’s executive mandate. He said his party has opposed EULEX from the start, not because it stood against justice but because it insisted it derived from local institutions. “Being that EULEX is ending its mandate by leaving behind more injustice than justice, European taxpayers have wasted all that money through EULEX in Kosovo,” Selimi said. The paper recalls that as of this Friday, the EU mission will no longer have executive authority in Kosovo and its role will largely be advisory.

**Veseli: European MPs support removal of visas for Kosovo (*RTK*)**

Kosovo Assembly President, Kadri Veseli, held separate meetings on Wednesday with members of the European Parliament and with rapporteurs for different Balkans countries. Veseli met with Vice-President of the European Parliament Rainer Wieland, head of ADET and Rapporteur for Serbia David McAllister, Head of the delegation for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo Tonino Picula, and the leader of political Social-Democrat political group at the European Parliament Udo Bullman. Later on he met with Euro-deputies Andrey Kovachev, Asim Ademov and with Angel Dzambaski. Veseli said the people of Kosovo expect to have freedom of movement in the Schengen Zone this year.

**Rama: EU’s policy toward Kosovo is a great shame (*RTK*)**

Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, told ***Anadolu*** news agency on Wednesday that lack of freedom of movement for the people of Kosovo “is a great shame for the European Union”. Commenting on the process of talks between Pristina and Belgrade, Rama said the EU must take a position and that it is up to the leaders of Kosovo to lead the process. “Albania helped and continues to help by never speaking on behalf of Kosovo, but by speaking at every occasion about Kosovo,” Rama said.

**Vetevendosje to sue government and court over salary increase (*media*)**

Several media report that Vetevendosje officials accused on Wednesday the Constitutional Court of bias for ruling that the government’s decision for salary increase does not represent a constitutional violation. Vetevendosje MP Albulena Haxhiu told a press conference that the government’s decision for increasing its staff’s salaries is a criminal act and that it interferes in the Assembly’s competencies. Vetevendosje announced it will sue Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and the ministers that voted in favour of the decision, including the Constitutional Court judges whose salaries are also among those standing to be increased.

**O’Connell: Zharku’s return as a free man, shameful (*RTK*)**

Ruairi O’Connell, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kosovo, took to Facebook on Wednesday to write that return to Kosovo of the former mayor of Kacanik, Xhabir Zharku, sentenced to three years of prison, as a free man, is shameful. “Xhabir Zharku was sentenced to three years in prison for his crimes. His return to Kosovo as a free man is shameful. But the real shame is that in the six years since he was allowed to escape justice, nothing has been done to stop other criminal politicians doing the same thing. I see no reason for a legal provision which allows criminals to flee the country and live abroad instead of serving their sentence in jail. I hope that the Government’s Justice reforms will close this loophole, and so give support to those police and prosecutors who are serious about fighting organised crime. The UK needs Kosovo to be a serious partner in the fight against corruption and organised crime,” O’Connell wrote.

**Constitutional Court to remain without decision-making powers (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports that as of tomorrow, Kosovo’s Constitutional Court will remain without decision-making powers due to facing shortage of judges. Two judges of the court will have their mandates expire today while the third has already left the court. Meanwhile the Kosovo Assembly failed last month to elect new judges to fill the vacant posts. The Court requires at least seven judges out of a total of nine to be able to decide on cases and the situation will continue until new judges are selected. Officials from the Kosovo Assembly said the vacancy announcement has been closed and 16 persons applied for the posts. The candidates are expected to be interviewed during next week.

**Macedonian President turns down historic deal over name dispute (*Koha*)**

Macedonian President, Gjorgje Ivanov, said on Wednesday that he would not sign the agreement between Skopje and Athens according to which the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would be called the Republic of North Macedonia, the paper reports on page four. “My position is final, and I will not bow down to any pressure, blackmail or threat. I will support or sign such a damaging agreement,” Ivanov told a press conference in Skopje on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, risks facing a vote of no confidence in parliament over the name deal.

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